

OPERATING GUIDELINES SOUTHERN REGION INCIDENT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION May 2008 Revision

Enclosed are Operating Guidelines for Incident Business Administration activities within the Region. These guidelines emphasize the critical financial and administrative procedures to be followed on incidents within the region. These operating guidelines are intended to complement the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH) which provides national direction. These guidelines are provided to support Incident Management Team (IMT) operations and to provide consistency in incident business management operations throughout the region.

Any changes to these guidelines will be negotiated with the Agency Administrator (AA) and the Incident Business Advisor (IBA) in advance. Appendix A has the Incident Business and Agency Contacts.

Cost efficiency continues to be a primary objective for incident management teams. Efforts should focus on high cost resources, under-utilized equipment, extravagant purchases, sensitive items, and property accountability issues.

Personnel

The incident host agency is responsible for either retaining the authority for hiring of casuals or delegating it to the Incident Management Teams. If the host agency chooses to delegate the authority to an IMT, Appendix B must be completed and given to the Finance Section Chief.

All AD exception positions must be approved at the Regional level.

Compensation for Injury and Agency-Provided Medical Care

The agency administrator will designate a local contact for this function. The Comp/Claims Unit Leader will ensure original documents are forwarded as directed.

See Appendix F for specific Incident Agency/Regional/Local information.

Drivers License Requirements

All drivers, including casual hires, of government owned, rented, or leased vehicles, must adhere to employing agency specific certification/licensing requirements. All agencies require a valid State driver's license. See Appendix C for Agency specific Regional requirements.

Acquisition

Consideration must be given to cost efficiencies, specific needs and past performance when obtaining requested services and supplies. Upon arrival on the host forest the Finance Section will be given an Incident Service and Supply Plan (if one has been established). Incident only EERAs initiated at the incident and are valid only for the duration of that specific incident (Block 3 of the EERA, OF-294).

The Incident Management Team will not sign up any non-dispatched equipment that shows up at fire camp (for example "fire chasers") unless prior approval is obtained from the AA/AR/IBA.

Land Use and Facility Agreements

If no agreement exists, the Incident Management Team will coordinate with the local agency's representative to determine appropriate use and rates.

Motel and meal tickets may be used or another approved documentation system. If a method other than motel and meal tickets is used, the method must be approved by the IBA in advance. Other approved methods are electronic spreadsheets with room number, names, etc. which are receipted by the Logistics Section Chief or Facilities Unit Leader.

Release of Contract Resources

Release of contract resources will be at the discretion of the Incident Management Team based on sound business practices with input from the local agency administrator.

Supplemental Foods and Restricted Supplies/Items

The Incident Management Team will follow the Supplemental Food Policy as stated in the IIBMH, Chapter 20, Section 25. Exceptions to this policy shall have prior written approval by the AR/IBA before obtaining supplemental items.

Per national direction, supplemental foods are normally not provided for settings such as Expanded Dispatch, Mobilization Centers, Area Command, Fire Caches, Tanker Bases, Staging Areas or other non-fire camp locations. There may be some exceptions for these locations where sufficient potable water is not available to accommodate the number of personnel on site.

See Appendix H for a listing of restricted items.

Cell Phones

When IMT's/buying teams/area command teams arrive at an incident, they should first check with the agency administrator or delegated official to obtain instructions for obtaining the needed cell phones for their official use. When on an assignment and if the incident does not have cell phones available, the next option is to obtain cell phones through the normal ordering process.

Buying Unit Procedures

Buying Teams will be ordered when determined by the Unit's AO/AA to support the local incidents.

The Buying Team Leader should visit the incident administrative sites and establish open lines of communication with the incident Supply Unit Leader and the Procurement Unit Leader. **The BT Leader should establish a direct ordering system (if practical) between the supply unit and the buying team to expedite procurement resource orders**, coordinating with Dispatch so everyone understands the ordering process. On incidents where a direct ordering system is not practical, orders should be processed through expanded dispatch. Supplies available through the national cache system should be ordered through established channels.

Property Management

Incident Management Teams will emphasize good property management. The IMT Logistics section will review property checkout and return procedures to ensure proper accountability. Special consideration should be given to those items of a personal nature (accountable and durable). This includes items such as flight helmets, flight suits, brush coats, GPS units, satellite phones, etc.

All non-standard cache items such as sleeping bags and Kevlar pants will be replaced with cache items.

No contractor equipment will be replaced through the incident supply cache. Contractors must go through the contract claim process for replacement of lost or damaged items.

An agency representative may conduct post-audits of the cache supplied forms using Fire Loss Tolerance Standards. These reviews may be performed after the incident and the IC will be asked to explain discrepancies when the losses exceed the acceptable Fire Loss Tolerance Standards. Loss tolerance standards will be provided to the IMT upon arrival.

Rental Vehicles

We intend to pilot test use of the GSA-Short Term Rental Program for rental vehicle needs. Once the procedures are finalized, we will issue supplemental information on the program.

Rental vehicles are to be tracked as accountable property. Procedures outlined below are for tracking rental vehicles:

- Rental vehicles assigned to Incident Management Teams, Transportation Units, Dispatch Centers, etc. will be tracked by the IMT's
- The individual responsible for or assigned a rental vehicle is responsible to report the damage to the Com/Claim Unit Leader and document damage on the Property Lost or Damage Report, OF-289. These reports shall be maintained in the Finance files as backup for potential contract claim.
- The Incident Management Team or other incident unit will ensure rental vehicles are inspected upon return and appropriate forms completed to document damage prior to an individuals release and return of the vehicle to the rental company

Claims

Contract Claims: The Procurement Unit Leader with delegated authority is responsible for settling contract claims at the incident. If there is not a Procurement Unit Leader available the Buying Team Leader may settle claims within their delegated authority. At the end of the incident, all actual and potential claims will be fully documented, submitted to and reviewed with the responsible incident agency procurement official (identified in Appendix A).

Tort/Employee Claims: Upon arrival to the incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will make contact with the incident agency claims liaison (identified in Appendix A) to determine the expectations and discuss the requirements of the claims process. The incident agency claims liaison will provide forms or other documents the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will need for duration of the incident. This information will include agency specific claims processes. The incident agency claims liaison will also be available to support the Comp/Claims Unit Leader when issues arise that might require research of unusual situations, authorities, etc.

Before leaving the incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will audit the documentation and prepare a log of all claims, defining what's included and what is left to collect on each claim. The case files should be enclosed in an Incident Claims Case File Envelope (OF-314). The log and envelopes will be given to the incident agency claims liaison at the end of the incident.

- Appendix F may be included for SPECIFIC Regional/Local information

Cost Accounting and Cost Share Agreements

IMT responsibility is to track and report costs as required by the cost share agreement. They can provide advice to the AA but it is not their role to negotiate said agreement. A recommended timeframe for completion of the cost share agreement is within 48 hours of the incident becoming multi-jurisdictional.

I-Suite Requirements

The team should have in place, or adopt, standard I-Suite operating procedures. If a team is not trained in the use of all I-Suite modules, appropriate personnel should be ordered to accomplish the successful implementation of I-Suite. This may require a request for an I-Suite Liaison (I-Suite technical specialist), which can be made through the I-Suite helpdesk. Refer to Appendix D for additional details on obligation reporting requirements and the required daily COST reports.

I-Suite Repository Requirements

IMTs are required to upload the I-Suite database at the end of the IMT assignment. A CD copy of the data base should be made for the host unit and included in the Final Incident Package. The CD must include the database admin password.

Law Enforcement

A law enforcement agency contact from the local area will be identified to the IMT, who will make periodic contacts with the team. Reference Appendix A.

Sheriff's Office personnel used on the incident should be covered under the Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreements that are in place with each County and coordinated with Agency Law Enforcement personnel.

Reimbursement to local law enforcement agencies should be limited to activities/services that are beyond the established responsibilities of the law enforcement agency. The Law Enforcement liaison can assist IMTs in determining responsibilities.

Incident security activities such as traffic control, camp security etc. may be handled by the law enforcement personnel assigned to the incident. Use unarmed security personnel when cost effective and appropriate to the security activities needed. Coordinate the decision to use contract security personnel with the incident Law Enforcement liaison identified in Appendix A..

Closeout

The final Finance Package will meet the uniform filing scheme for incident records packages, which can be found at: <http://www.nifc.gov/records/index.html>

At the end of the incident, the final incident package will be forwarded either by mail, or turned in at the closeout to the host unit/agency. The IBA will participate in the exit interview of each assigned IMT. If time permits, the IBA will provide a verbal assessment of (1) commendable performance, (2) things that went well, and (3) things needing improvement. The host agency will provide a financial performance rating 60 to 120 days following the incident.

APPENDIX A

Incident Business and Agency Contacts

Authority/responsibility for Incident Business Administration practices is delegated to the following agency personnel:

Title	Name	Office Phone	Cellular Phone
Agency Regional Incident Business Specialist	DIANE N. TAYLOR	678 441 5127	404 290 3615
Agency Administrative Representative			

AGENCY CONTACTS

Title	Name	Office Phone	Home Phone	Cellular Phone
Human Resources				
Financial Management				
Acquisition/Contracting Contract Claims				
Information Resources (Computers)				
Telecommunications (Voice/Data Lines, Radios)				
Agreements				
Compensation/OWCP (HIPPA)				
Claims (Non-contract)				
Law Enforcement				
Fleet				
Safety				
Property Management				

APPENDIX B

Delegation of AD Hiring Authority

File Code:
Route To:

Date:

Subject: Delegation of AD Hiring Authority

To: Incident Commander

I am delegating the authority to hire casual employees to the Incident Management Team, specifically to the Finance Section Chief, Time Unit Leader and/or Procurement Unit Leader.

All hiring of casual employees will be in accordance with the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook and its supplements.

Responsibilities of the hiring official are:

- Ensure the proper paperwork is obtained and filled out completely
- Validate that the person is qualified for the position
- Provide the casual employee with all the information related to direct deposit and tax withholdings
- Be knowledgeable of the IIBMH as it relates to the AD Pay Plan and its use

For positions not listed in the Incident Position Matrix of the AD Pay Plan, the hiring official may establish an Excepted Position. The hiring official will need to write a brief description of duties to accompany the Single Resource Casual Hiring form for payment.

The agency contact for questions related to AD hiring is _____

/s/ _____

(Agency Administrator)

APPENDIX C

Forest Service Drivers Licenses

Forest Service Licensing Requirements

Any employee who needs to drive a Forest Service owned or leased vehicle must be authorized to do so and there is no exception for AD employees. Personal vehicles reimbursed under the federal travel regulations are exempt from the requirement.

APPENDIX D

Accruals and Payments

Incident Accruals are required on any incident utilizing Forest Service paid resources. To assist the ASC incident finance staff in tracking accruals, please submit the summary and detail reports for ALL accruals via e-mail or fax to ASC-IF. Refer to "How to Code ISuite Accruals" and additional information on accruals posted at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/incident_payments.html. Directions for creating the daily export can be found at http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/lsuite_export_finance.pdf

Payments - EERA's

The **using** agency processes payments for EERA's regardless of who initiated the agreement.

1. **FS Incidents** – Mail payment package direct to ASC-Incident Finance along with transmittal document as outlined in ASC Incident Finance Branch Payment Procedures posted at http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/incident_payments.html

Payments – Casual Hires (AD's) The **hiring** agency processes the individual casual payments, regardless of the incident jurisdiction.

1. **DOI Casual Hires** – Submit completed OF-288's to the incident unit.
2. **FS Casual Hires** – Submit completed OF-288 along with transmittal letter as outlined in the ASC Incident Finance Branch Payment Procedures posted at http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/incident_payments.html. The IMT should not allow any FS hired casual to retain their original timesheet.

APPENDIX E

Regional and Local Unit Links

Additional information Regional and Local Unit links:

- Final incident packages
- AD payment batch transmittals requirements/unique identifiers -
http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/2008_incident_procedures/2008_ASC_incident_procedures.doc
- EERA payment transmittals requirement -
http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/2008_incident_procedures/2008_ASC_incident_procedures.doc
- Issuance of block of S-numbers
- Issuance of block of Incident Only EERA numbers
- OWCP/APMC information – See Appendix G for Forest Service Letter and info on filing
- ASC Claims Link - <http://fsweb.r3.fs.fed.us/asc/bfm/programs/financial-operations/claims/index.php>
- Link to the Incident Business Practices website
http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/incident_payments/incident_payments.html

APPENDIX G

OWCP/APMC Info - Forest Service

HCM now Manages all FS Workers' Compensation Claims. HCM's Workers' Compensation (WC) section is now the only point of contact for processing and managing all FS employees' work-related injury/ illness claims. This includes claims for injuries associated with project work or incidents. These changes are designed to provide better and more consistent service to injured workers.

The Workers Comp section is also solely responsible for maintaining compensation files, working with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), authorizing medical care, and counseling employees.

For advice and assistance, employees may call the Contact Center at 877.372.7248; press 2 for HCM; then press 5 to speak to a Workers' Compensation Agent. For more information, go to the [Workers' Compensation](#) Section on the HCM Intranet.

In the event of an Emergency... Workers' Compensation staff is available 24 hours/7 days a week. Call 505.280.7691 to speak to a specialist.

The ASC/HCM/Workers' Compensation Section (WC) is now the initial point of contact for processing and managing all work related injury/illness claims. This includes all Forest Service employees, whether injured doing project work or on an incident. No other personnel or sub-units in the agency should be providing these services, which include maintaining compensation files, contacting OWCP, authorizing medical care using either the CA-16 or FS-6100-16, or counseling of employees.

In conjunction with the Interagency Fire Business organization, WC has updated the workers' compensation direction in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH) for treatment of injured workers while at the site of an incident. This includes granting certain incident personnel limited authority to authorize medical care. Once the employee leaves the incident site, WC will deal with all OWCP issues.

The initial process of filing a claim has not changed:

- Each employee that sustains a work-related injury and wants to file a workers' compensation claim reports the incident to their supervisor and files their claim through the Safety and Health Information Portal System (SHIPS), accessed through Dashboard. If they are unable to access SHIPS, the employee should file a hard copy without delay and later return to enter the information into SHIPS. If the employee has questions, they can contact their supervisor and/or call WC Section at 877-372-7248, press "2" for HCM, then press "5" for WC.
- The Supervisor completes their portion of the claim form (CA-1/CA-2) in SHIPS, or hard copy, if necessary. They may fax the form to the WC Section at 505-563-9981, or mail it overnight via Fed Ex to the address listed below. If forms are faxed, mail the original form to the address below using regular mail. This needs to be completed within **two (2) days** of the employee filing the claim.

USDA Forest Service
Human Capital Management
Mail Stop 118-WC
3900 Masthead St., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

- The WC Section will review, and finalize the forms and submit them to OWCP, within the required ten (10) working days.

How is medical care authorized?

- Who should I call for authorization? The injured employee, supervisor, or other responsible party can call the Contact Center at 877-372-7248, press “2” for HCM, then press “5” for WC. Advise the Contact Center representative this is a request for authorizing medical treatment and you need to speak with someone in the WC. Your call will be transferred directly to the WC Section after providing information needed by the Contact Center.
- What if the injury occurs on a weekend or after hours and no one is available at the WC unit to authorize the medical care? The WC Section will soon be providing 24 hours/7 days a week coverage for emergency use. Calls during the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. MDT should be made through the Contact Center. This will be available March 20, 2008, and the phone number is 505-280-7691.

What if I can't get hold of anyone, even with the 24 hour number? That is not a problem. Remember, the injured worker can get medical care from their chosen physician and the WC Section can contact the provider with authorization when they return to the office.

- This is a very common situation throughout the federal government in all agencies covered by this program. The employee can always go to the hospital emergency room and they are required to provide treatment even without an advance guarantee of payment. If you have questions, give WC a call.
- Where should I call for advice and assistance? For assistance, employees and/or supervisors should call the Contact Center at 877-372-7248, press “2” for HCM, then press “5” for WC. Once an employee requests assistance through the ASC/HCM Contact Center, the WC Assistant or Specialist will provide their direct contact number to the injured employee. We encourage any and all questions from both employees and supervisors.
- Where can I find more information? Complete instructions regarding the claims process can be found on the ASC/HCM/WC web site: <http://fsweb.hcm.fs.fed.us/owcp/all.php>. This site will be updated soon and continues to be updated as changes occur.

APPENDIX H

Restricted/Prohibited Items

The following items are either restricted from purchasing, or limited in some manner. Take into account local considerations (i.e. a remote location with limited services and supplies verse being in or adjacent to a full service community where the needed resources are readily available) when applying this direction. Assigned Supply Unit Leaders and/or buying unit teams will refer to this list when purchasing supplies and services for incident operations.

Prohibited Items

- ✓ Alcoholic beverages
- ✓ Clothing, buttons, stickers, hats, etc., with special or specific printing, coloring, or logos
- ✓ Plants & Flowers
- ✓ Fees for the use of recreational facilities (i.e. hot springs)
- ✓ Massage or other therapist services
- ✓ Concessionaire payments for use of Federal Lands
- ✓ Vitamins and mineral supplements

Restricted Items

- ✓ Local purchase of newspapers for the incident will be limited to 5 per day per incident up to 250 individuals then limited to 1 for every 50 personnel per day. (Type I or II incidents)
- ✓ Special clothing (swimsuits, caulk boots, etc)
- ✓ Pillows or sleeping bags (other than regular GSA, fire cache type)
- ✓ Orders for specific magazines, newspapers, or other literature
- ✓ WCF and GSA Vehicle modifications/repairs will be coordinated through the local fleet manager
- ✓ Uses of motels, hotels, or other commercial rooms are a very rare exception for personnel assigned to an Incident base. Any exception to this must be approved in advance by the IBA/AA. If not approved employee will not be reimbursed.
- ✓ Barbers will only be provided for the military at their request
- ✓ Agency policy will be followed for approval on purchase of all telecommunications equipment
- ✓ Automatic Data Processing Equipment unless approved by agency Information Resource personnel

Specialty Items/Services:

The Agency Administrator has the authority to establish additional purchasing restrictions or limitations on specialty items. This authority may be delegated to the AR or IBA in writing. The following list is not all inclusive and agencies should add items as necessary. (Host incident Agency Administrators need to designate the level of approval – i.e. FSC has authority to approve the purchase of cameras or the AR/IBA is the approving officer for cellular telephones).

Item	Approval Level	Item	Approval Level
Cameras (digital, still, video)		Cellular telephones	
GPS units		Satellite telephones	
Scanners		Printers	
Handheld radios and LMR		Laptop computers	
FAX machines		Copy Machines	
		Non-standard cache items	

*Procurement officials must follow agency regulations when purchasing any of the above items. (Property will be contacted to issue property numbers as required.)

When ordering mobile GIS and office services, due to the high cost, IMTs are required to provide written justification to support the need of these resources.